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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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SUBJ: URANIUM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES IN JAPAN

AN AIRGRAM DISCUSSING THE CHRONOLOGY OF URANIUM ENRICHMENT
ACTIVITIES IN JAPAN HAS BEEN TRANSMITTED THIS DATE. FOLLOW-
ING IS A GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION AND A BRIEF RECAP
OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

SUMMARY

1. CURRENT UNCERTAINTIES IN U.S. PLANS FOR SUPPLYING
ENRICHMENT SERVICES ABROAD HAVE HAD AN UNSETTLING EFFECT
UPON JAPAN'S NUCLEAR FUEL CUSTOMERS.

2. IN ORDER TO AVOID COMPLETE RELIANCE UPON A FOREIGN
SOURCE FOR A CRUCIAL ENERGY RESOURCE, JAPAN IS SEEKING WAYS
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TO AUGMENT CURRENT CONTRACTS WITH THE U.S. BY CONTRACTING

WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND BY DEVELOPING A JAPANESE URANIUM ENRICHMENT TECHNOLOGY.

3. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT A U.S. MONOPOLY COULD BE MAINTAINED FOR LONG IN THE FACE OF: A) JAPAN'S DESIRE TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF SUPPLY, B) JAPAN'S TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES, C) THE AWARENESS OF OTHER COUNTRIES TO ATTRACTIVE TRADING POSSIBILITIES AS POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS OF NUCLEAR RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY.

4. NEVERTHELESS, UNCERTAINTY IN JAPAN'S FUTURE ENRICHMENT SUPPLY IS MOVING JAPAN, THE WORLD'S MOST SIGNIFICANT ENRICHMENT CONSUMER OUTSIDE THE U.S., STEADILY TOWARD SEEKING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF SUPPLY.

5. JAPAN HAS BEEN STUDYING GASEOUS DIFFUSION TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO BE IN A POSITION TO ENTER INTO A JOINT VENTURE ON A GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANT PREFERABLY WITH THE U.S.

6. CLOSE NUCLEAR TIES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND JAPAN EITHER IN A SUPPLIER-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP FOR ENRICHED URANIUM OR IN A JOINT VENTURE RELATIONSHIP FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF AN ENRICHMENT PLANT WOULD, IN ADDITION TO BENEFITTING U.S. FOREIGN TRADE, PERMIT U.S. TO MAINTAIN AN INFLUENTIAL RELATIONSHIP OVER THE DIRECTION OF JAPAN'S FUTURE NUCLEAR POLICY.

CURRENT STATUS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

1. ENRICHMENT SURVEY COMMITTEE (SEC) MEMBERS ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING NEXT WEEK WITH MESSRS. BECHTEL AND O' DONNELL OF UEA TO DISCUSS THE NEXT STEP IN THEIR JOINT VENTURE TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A PRIVATELY FUNDED ENRICHMENT PLANT. ESC IS EVALUATING THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES OF THE JOINTLY PREPARED STUDY ON GASEOUS DIFFUSION AND CENTRIFUGE TECHNOLOGY RESPECTIVELY. PRESUMABLY, THE FIRST EFFORT WOULD BE AN ADD-ON GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANT IN THE U.S. USING U.S. TECHNOLOGY.

2. THE ENRICHMENT & REPROCESSING GROUP (ERG) IS AWAITING A RENEWED OFFER FROM EXXON TO PARTICIPATE IN CENGEX. THEIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREVIOUS PROPOSAL WAS WITHDRAWN WHEN GE DROPPED OUT OF CENGEX.

3. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT A JAPANESE OFFICIAL RECENTLY VISITED SOUTH AFRICA TO ASCERTAIN THE STATUS OF THEIR URANIUM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES.

4. PRIME MINISTER TANAKA JUST RETURNED FROM AUSTRALIA WHERE A COMMITMENT TO SUPPLY 9000 TONS OF URANIUM PRIOR TO 1986 WAS

RECONFIRMED AND THE AUSTRALIANS EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO
CONSIDER JAPAN'S NEED FOR URANIUM TO THE YEAR 2000. THE TWO COUNTRIES
AGREED TO COOPERATE IN A STUDY OF A JOINT URANIUM ENRICHMENT
ENTERPRISE IN AUSTRALIA.
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